

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-16 are currently pending in this application. Claims 17-20 have been cancelled as a result of the restriction requirement. Claim 1, 4-6, and 10 have been amended. No new matter has been added through these amendments.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-16 were rejected as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,602,724 to Redeker et al. in view of US Patent 6,010,538 to Sun et al. In light of the amendments and arguments presented herein Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection as the combination of Redeker and Sun fail to define each feature of claims 1 and 10, as amended.

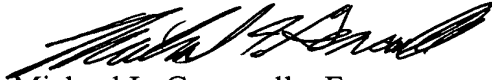
Claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the feature that the onset of planarization is identified based upon a decrease in a second derivative value being monitored after an increase in that value. As illustrated in Figure 7 and discussed in the corresponding text, the steady increase in the second derivative and then the penultimate drop indicates the onset of planarization. As acknowledged by the Examiner Redeker does not teach identifying onset of planarization based upon a change in the second derivative. Sun does not teach the amended features of claims 1 and 10. In particular, since Sun is measuring an optical signal and not the voltage claimed here, there is no increase in the optical signal followed by a decrease to indicate the onset of planarization. In fact, Figure 8D of Sun illustrates that breakthrough would occur by the time the second derivative begins decreasing, which is well past the onset of planarization.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. A notice of allowance is respectfully requested. In the event a telephone conversation would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner

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may reach the undersigned at (408) 774-6921. If any fees are due in connection with the filing of this paper, then the Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0805 (Order No. LAM2P419). A copy of the transmittal is enclosed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,
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